



Charter Schools Accountability and Support  
2012-2013

**BRONX LIGHTHOUSE CHARTER SCHOOL  
ANNUAL COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW REPORT**

**2012-2013 SCHOOL YEAR**

# Part 1: School Overview & History

## School Overview and History:

Bronx Lighthouse Charter School (BLCS) is a K-10 school serving approximately 571 students<sup>1</sup> in grades K-10 in the 2012-2013 school year. BLCS is divided into two academies, the Lower Academy (LA), serving grade K-6, and a College Prep Academy (CPA), currently serving grades 7-10. It opened in 2004-2005, and is under the terms of its second charter. The school's projected full grade span is K-12, which it's expected to reach in 2014-2015, contingent on approval of its renewal application.<sup>2</sup> The school is located at adjoining public and private spaces on 1001 Intervale Avenue, Bronx, NY 10459, within CSD 12.<sup>3</sup>

The tables below detail the school's performance on the NYC DOE Progress Report.<sup>4</sup>

**K-8 Progress Report Results**

Progress Report Grade	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Overall Grade	A	B	D	D
Student Progress	B	B	F	F
Student Performance	A	C	C	C
School Environment	A	A	A	B
Closing the Achievement Gap Points	3	2.3	1	1.5

**High School Progress Report Results**

Progress Report Grade	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Overall Grade				Ungraded
Student Progress				Ungraded
Student Performance				Ungraded
School Environment				Ungraded
Closing the Achievement Gap Points				Ungraded

BLCS's primary intake grade for enrolling new students is grade K. BLCS, however, takes applications and holds an annual lottery for all grades to backfill open seats due to attrition. There were 1,708 students on the waitlist after the Spring 2012 lottery.<sup>5</sup>

The average attendance rate for the 2012-2013 school year-to-date is 95%.<sup>6</sup>

On the 2011-12 NYC DOE School Survey, BLCS received Average satisfaction scores for Communication and Safety & Respect and Below Average scores for Academic Expectations and Engagement. Teacher and student participation in the 2011-2012 survey were above city averages (teachers 86% to 82%; students 94% to 82%), while parent participation was below city averages (45% to 53%).<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Enrollment based on ATS data from 3/8/13.

<sup>2</sup> NYC DOE internal data.

<sup>3</sup> NYC DOE Location Code Generating System database.

<sup>4</sup> 2010-12 data from NYC DOE Progress Report – <http://schools.nyc.gov/progressreport>; 2008-09 data from BLCS's Annual Report. Schools serving HS grades get ungraded PRs until they have their first graduating class of students. BLCS would get its first graded PR in the fall of 2015 for the 2014-15 school year. Ungraded PRs do contain results in areas of Student Progress such as Credit Accumulation and Weighted Regents Pass Rate and School Environment.

<sup>5</sup> Self-reported information from school-submitted Data Collection Form.

<sup>6</sup> Self-reported information from school-submitted Data Collection Form.

<sup>7</sup> NYC DOE School Survey – <http://schools.nyc.gov/survey>

Bronx Lighthouse Charter School was renewed for a second charter term of five years in the spring of 2009.

In 2011-2012, BLCS replaced its Upper Academy principal during the school year with an interim principal from the school's Charter Management Organization (CMO), Lighthouse Academies, and later hired Richard Burke to fill the position. The Lower Academy principal resigned at the end of the 2011-12. For the 2012-2013 school year Richard Burke was named school Lead Principal, reporting to the Board. Dianne Hardcastle was named principal of the Upper Academy (re-named College Prep Academy) and Terry Foster was named principal of the Lower Academy; both academy principals reported to Lead Principal, Richard Burke. In October 2012, Principal Foster resigned for health reasons and Burke assumed her responsibilities. In the spring of 2013, Liz Runco, the Lower Academy Director of Instruction, was promoted to Lower Academy principal.

Lighthouse Academies provides business and academic services to Bronx Lighthouse Charter School, one of two charter schools in New York City. The CMO also manages Metropolitan Lighthouse Charter School, also in the Bronx. Services from the CMO are coordinated and/or provided by a Regional Director dedicated to the two schools the CMO manages in the Bronx. Lighthouse Academies provides school leadership support and evaluation, back office support, payroll and HR, vendor management, and financial and accounting support. It also supports implementation of the Lighthouse education model, providing curriculum guides, supplemental resources to support Common Core instruction, and professional development. The annual budget of the school is created in conjunction with the Board of Trustees of the school. The school paid a flat fee in 2011-2012 of \$230,000 to Lighthouse for its support, resources, and services, with a bonus potential of \$35,000.

## Part 2: Annual Review Process Overview

### Rating Framework

The New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) Charter Schools Accountability & Support Team (CSAS) performs a comprehensive review of each NYC DOE-authorized charter school to investigate three primary questions: is the school an academic success; is the school a fiscally sound, viable organization; and is the school in compliance with its charter and all applicable laws and regulations? To ascertain matters of sustainability and strategic planning, CSAS inquires about the school's plans for its next charter term.

This review is conducted by analyzing student performance data and collecting and evaluating school-submitted documents during the 2012-2013 school year. The report outlines evidence found during this review.

As per the school's monitoring plan, CSAS may also conduct a visit to a school. Visits may focus on academic outcomes, governance, organizational structure, operational compliance, fiscal sustainability or any combination of these as necessary.

In addition, a school's charter goals are reviewed. The progress that a school has made towards achieving its goals at this particular point during its charter period is noted. However, as this is an interim review before the end of the charter term, progress towards goals is not used as part of this evaluation.

### Essential Questions

#### *Is the school an academic success?*

To assess whether a school is an academic success, CSAS considers performance measures, including, but not limited to the following:

- Overall NYC DOE Progress Report score,
- New York State ELA and Math results and/or New York State Regents exams,
- ELA and Math proficiency compared to the district for elementary and middle schools, and graduation rates compared to the city for high schools,
- New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA) or other approved alternate assessments, and
- Performance data pertaining to college and career readiness.

Academic success is rated as **Demonstrated, Partially Demonstrated, or Not Yet Demonstrated**. If a school does not yet have a NYC DOE Progress Report, it is rated as Not Yet Demonstrated.

#### *Is the school a fiscally sound, viable organization?*

To assess whether a school is a fiscally sound, viable organization, CSAS focuses on three areas: Governance Structure & Organizational Design, School Climate & Community Engagement, and Financial Health. This includes an analysis of the school's audited financial statements, based on the NACSA (National Association of Charter School Authorizers) Financial Framework<sup>8</sup>.

CSAS also considers a variety of supporting materials and data, including but not limited to the following:

- Board of Trustee bylaws,
- Board of Trustee meeting minutes,
- Annual Reports submitted by schools to New York State Education Department (NYSED),
- NYC DOE School Survey,
- Data collection sheets provided by schools,

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<sup>8</sup>[http://www.qualitycharters.org/assets/files/images/stories/pdfs/publications/Performance\\_Framework\\_Fall\\_2012\\_Draft.pdf](http://www.qualitycharters.org/assets/files/images/stories/pdfs/publications/Performance_Framework_Fall_2012_Draft.pdf), page 38-59

- Student, staff, and Board turnover,
- Authorized enrollment numbers, and
- Annual financial audits.

A school's Governance Structure & Organizational Design and Climate & Community Engagement are rated as **Developed, Partially Developed, or Not Yet Developed**. A school's Financial Health is rated to indicate whether there are concerns about the near-term financial obligations and the financial sustainability of the school.

***Is the school compliant with its charter and all applicable law and regulations?***

As it pertains to compliance, CSAS identifies areas of compliance and noncompliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

**Staff Representatives**

The following staff representatives participated in the review of this school's documents as detailed above:

- Richard Larios, DOE
- Gabrielle Mosquera, DOE
- Kamilah O'Brien, DOE

The above also participated on a full monitoring visit to the school that took place on May 13-14, 2013, along with the following:

- Lynette Aqueron, DOE
- Allen Miller, DOE
- Kate Mathews, DOE
- Pier Duncan, DOE

## Part 3: Findings

### Summary of Findings

Based on CSAS review, the following findings are made. To date, BLCS:

- has not yet demonstrated academic achievement and progress for its elementary and middle grades (p. 7-13).
- has not yet demonstrated academic achievement and progress for its high school grades as it has received only one ungraded NYC DOE High School Progress Report (p. 7).
- has a partially developed governance structure and organizational design (p. 14).
- has not yet developed a stable school culture (p. 14-15).
- is in a strong overall position to meet near-term financial obligations and is financially sustainable based on current practices (p. 16).
- is in compliance with some applicable laws and regulations and out of compliance with others (p. 17).
- plans to complete its expansion to K-12 in its next charter term and continue to refine and adjust its model and program to improve outcomes (p. 18).

This review included a desk audit, document review, a school visit and a Board of Trustees meeting observation with follow up communication via phone and email. CSAS visited the school on May 13-14, 2013.

## **Essential Question 1: Is the School an Academic Success?**

To date, BLCS has not yet demonstrated academic achievement and progress for its K-8 grades.

- After demonstrating academic success and progress in its initial charter term and in the initial year of the current term, BLCS has not sustained that success in its two most recently completed academic years.
- BLCS received an Overall grade of D on its 2011-12 NYC DOE Progress Report (see page 2), with an F in Student Progress and a C in Student Performance..
- BLCS has had NYS assessment results since 2006 in its first charter term and for all grades 3-8 since 2011.
- In 2011-12, the school's overall percent proficient, level 3 and 4, for ELA was 34.9% and for Math was 58.5%
- BLCS's overall percent proficient in both ELA and Math in 2011-12 was higher than the percent proficient of its district of location (CSD 12) in common tested grades, 34.9% to 28.9% in ELA and 58.5% to 42.7% in Math. Its overall proficiency scores for ELA and Math have been above the CSD for all years of the current charter term.
- The percentage of students proficient overall in ELA in 2011-12 increased incrementally from 2010-11, 34.1% to 34.9%, but declined in Math from 62.1% in the previous year to 58.5%. In addition, both the ELA and Math scores in 2011-12 were also lower than percent proficient achieved two years earlier in 2009-10.
- The school earned 1.5 Closing the Achievement Gap points on its 2011-12 NYC DOE Progress Report.

To date, with only one ungraded NYC DOE High School Progress Report, the school has not yet demonstrated academic achievement and progress for its high school grades.

- BLCS's College Prep Academy (CPA) received its first (ungraded) High School Progress Report in 2011-12. It will not receive a graded HS PR until its next charter term, should BLCS be renewed, in the fall of 2015 for the 2014-15 school year, when it has its first graduating cohort.
- As reported in its ungraded 2011-12 Progress Report, BLCS's CPA students took 2 Regent exams (with at least 15 students taking the exam), in Math and Science with the following test-taker results:
  - Integrated Algebra, 77% passing
  - Living Environment, 58% passing.
- In addition, 30% of the school's students who took the Integrated Algebra Regents met the CUNY identified college ready threshold.
- According to the school's 2011-12 HS Progress Report, 68.9% of its students in their first year completed 10+ credits—the school only served 9<sup>th</sup> graders that school year so had no second and third year HS students for the PR.

### **Progress Toward Academic Goals<sup>9</sup>**

- The school has identified 10 Academic Goals in its charter that apply to K-8 academic performance. According to its Annual Report to the New York State Education Department (NYSED), BLCS met 1 of the 10 academic goals, mostly met 2 other goals, and didn't meet 7 of its academic goals.
- The school, according to its 2011-12 Annual Report to NYSED, met 1 of 2 of its charter-identified Progress Toward Attainment of Academic Goals that applied to its high school grades in the 2011-12 school year, 1 goal result was met and 1 was unmet.

Representatives of the CSAS visited BLCS on May 13-14, 2013. Based on discussion, document review, and observation, the following was noted:

- School leadership reported growth on its Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) assessments from fall to winter administrations in both Reading and Math, with an increase from 36% to 50% of

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<sup>9</sup> Goal analysis is considered a neutral point for the purposes of this evaluation.

its students scoring at or above the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile in Reading and an increase from 40% to 47% of its students scoring at or above the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile in Math. Year to year comparisons, however, were essentially the same.

- CPA leadership reported the following results for tested students on the June 2013 Regents exams:
  - Integrated Algebra, 92% passing,
  - Geometry, 75% passing,
  - U.S. History, 96% passing,
  - Global History, 68% passing,
  - Living Environment, 87% passing,
  - Chemistry, 46% passing.
- Acuity Assessments are used for interim/predictive purposes three times a year and by teachers for unit assessments. Results on interim assessments were similar to NWEA results with smaller overall gains.
- For both NWEA and Acuity assessments, leadership reported gains were larger in College Prep Academy than in Lower Academy.
- To improve academic outcomes and meet the individual needs of its students, BLCS reported that it partnered with Kaplan K-12 to provide intervention support, largely through an after school program (4-6 PM, four days a week) that provides tutoring in small groups of 4 students to 1 tutor. The program is for students in grades 3-8 and began in February 2013.
- The school has a Response to Intervention (RtI) program supported by an Academic Intervention Services teacher and other staff. Intervention supports include push-in and after school interventions.
- Additional small group ELA and Math instructional support, according to school leadership, is provided during the day for students in grades 4-6, by additional teachers and tutors.
- On the days of the visit, 22 classrooms were observed by reviewers accompanied by BLCS instructional leaders:
  - In all observed classes students were either fully on-task and responsive to teacher directions and instructions or with one or two students briefly off-task during transitions or when first beginning assignments.
  - In the Lower Academy class size was between 20-22 students per class and, in the College Prep Academy, between 10-21 students in observed classes. In 16 of visited classrooms there was one teacher in the room providing instruction; in 6 there was a second adult providing instructional support (arts infusion specialist one time; special education push in support the other times).
  - The school uses a variety of assessments to inform instruction and monitor progress, including Acuity, NWEA, Fountas & Pinnell, Lighthouse Academy Writing Assessments and teacher-created or program specific assessments. According to leadership, Acuity may be replaced in the year ahead with either a new commercial assessment program or one developed by Lighthouse Academy.
  - In classrooms where questioning was observed (21 of the 22 classrooms) it was largely (16 of 21 classrooms) at the basic comprehension level with some follow-up questions asking students to explain a response. In five classrooms some higher level questions were also asked, asking for analysis or application in responses.
  - Visited classrooms were consistently print rich and well-resourced, including teacher laptops, Smartboards, instructional resources and recent student work displayed in classrooms and hallways.
- The following was noted regarding special education program implementation:
  - Every student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) was current and IEP records are maintained in a secure and confidential manner.
  - The school's special education programs and services are provided by appropriately certified/licensed individuals as per student IEPs. Programs and services are implemented within required timelines and in accordance with student IEP terms.

- Observed Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETSS) classes included a variety of instructional methods and scaffolding supports with general education and SETSS teachers collaborating in support of push-in and pull-out services.
- The school is working with its Committee on Special Education (CSE) to address processing of overdue initial referrals, of which there are 15 to 18.

<b>Bronx Lighthouse Charter School</b>				
Percent of Students Scoring at or above Level 3 - Whole School				
<b><u>ELA</u></b>	<b><u>2009</u></b>	<b><u>2010</u></b>	<b><u>2011</u></b>	<b><u>2012</u></b>
Bronx Lighthouse Charter School	67.8	37.2	34.1	34.9
CSD 12*	57	28.2	26.7	28.9
<b><u>Math</u></b>	<b><u>2009</u></b>	<b><u>2010</u></b>	<b><u>2011</u></b>	<b><u>2012</u></b>
Bronx Lighthouse Charter School	92	59.4	62.1	58.5
CSD 12*	74.5	38.4	40.5	42.7

\*CSD data represents only common testing grades, for all years presented

<b>Percent of Students Scoring at or above Level 3 - By Grade</b>				
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Grade 3

<b><u>ELA</u></b>	<b><u>2009</u></b>	<b><u>2010</u></b>	<b><u>2011</u></b>	<b><u>2012</u></b>
Bronx Lighthouse Charter School	69	40.9	34.8	27.3
CSD 12*	54.8	34.7	30.3	30.8
<b><u>Math</u></b>	<b><u>2009</u></b>	<b><u>2010</u></b>	<b><u>2011</u></b>	<b><u>2012</u></b>
Bronx Lighthouse Charter School	94	56.3	65.2	34.1
CSD 12*	83.7	40.3	36.1	37.8

Grade 4

<b><u>ELA</u></b>	<b><u>2009</u></b>	<b><u>2010</u></b>	<b><u>2011</u></b>	<b><u>2012</u></b>
Bronx Lighthouse Charter School	60	30.3	38.0	37.8
CSD 12*	53.3	27.1	35.3	32.5
<b><u>Math</u></b>	<b><u>2009</u></b>	<b><u>2010</u></b>	<b><u>2011</u></b>	<b><u>2012</u></b>
Bronx Lighthouse Charter School	93.9	74.2	65.2	51.1
CSD 12*	75.3	40.7	45.6	45.5

Grade 5

<b><u>ELA</u></b>	<b><u>2009</u></b>	<b><u>2010</u></b>	<b><u>2011</u></b>	<b><u>2012</u></b>
Bronx Lighthouse Charter School	68	48.8	35.3	38.6
CSD 12*	61.6	30.7	30.2	33.0
<b><u>Math</u></b>	<b><u>2009</u></b>	<b><u>2010</u></b>	<b><u>2011</u></b>	<b><u>2012</u></b>
Bronx Lighthouse Charter School	90.9	48.8	60.3	78.4
CSD 12*	76.8	38.4	44.4	44.7

## Grade 6

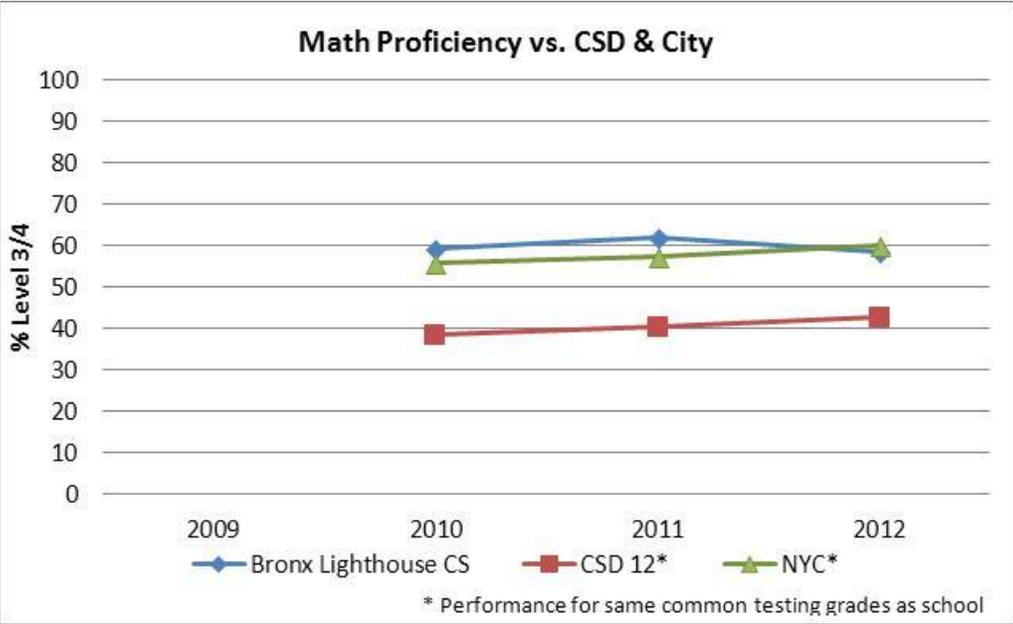
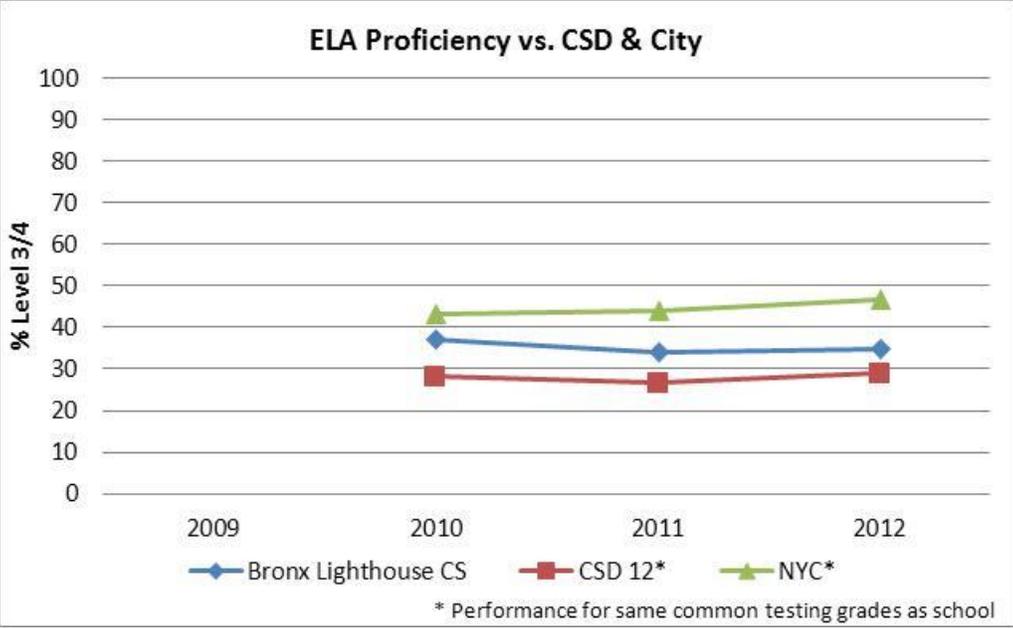
<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Bronx Lighthouse Charter School	74.3	30.2	48.9	33.3
CSD 12*	58.2	27.8	27.0	29.1
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Bronx Lighthouse Charter School	91	53.5	84.4	53.6
CSD 12*	61.6	37.4	40.8	42.4

## Grade 7

<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Bronx Lighthouse Charter School	NA	35.7	27.3	40.9
CSD 12*	NA	20.5	20.1	26.6
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Bronx Lighthouse Charter School	NA	59.5	50.0	70.5
CSD 12*	NA	35.1	38.1	43.2

## Grade 8

<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Bronx Lighthouse Charter School	NA	NA	15.6	28.9
CSD 12*	NA	NA	17.1	21.5
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Bronx Lighthouse Charter School	NA	NA	44.4	46.7
CSD 12*	NA	NA	37.8	42.4



2011-2012 High School Regents Performance Results			
The Bronx Lighthouse Charter School			
Regents Exams	Average Score	% Passing	% at college ready threshold
Mathematics			
Integrated Algebra	72	77%	30%
Geometry	.	.	.
Algebra 2/Trig	.	.	.
ELA			
English	.	.	.
Social Studies			
US History	.	.	.
Global History	.	.	.
Science			
Chemistry	.	.	.
Physics	.	.	.
Earth Science	.	.	.
Living Environment	67	58%	.
Languages			
Languages Other Than English	.	.	.

Source: 2011-12 NYC DOE Progress Reports

Note: if less than 15 students take a particular Regents exam the results are not included on the PR.

\* College-Ready threshold only applies to Math and ELA results.

## **Essential Question 2: Is the School a Fiscally Sound, Viable Organization?**

### **Governance Structure & Organizational Design**

To date, the school has a partially developed governance structure and organizational design.

- The Board has 11 members and the officer positions outlined in the Board's bylaws are filled, as recorded in meeting minutes.
- The Board's membership has been stable in 2012-2013, with the two Board members resigning for personal reasons and being replaced with new members in a timely manner.
- As recorded in meeting minutes, Board votes consistently demonstrate a quorum.
- The Board has active committees, as recorded in Board meeting minutes.
- There are clear lines of accountability between the Board, school leadership, and school staff as evidenced by the school's organization charter and school leadership's regular updates on academic, financial, and operational performance to the Board and its committees, as recorded in Board meeting minutes.
- The Board makes board minutes and agendas available on the school's website.
- The Board meets monthly with a minimum of ten meetings per calendar year. The Board has missed three scheduled meetings, and will therefore not meet its minimum for the current school year.

Based on monitoring and document review, the following was noted:

- The Board presidency changed this year and is now held by Rebecca Wollensack. The previous Board president, Chris Torres, continues to serve on the Board.
- Board meeting agenda are constructed around the school's Culture of Achievement Plan (CAP), with school leaders reporting on progress related to each of the plan's identified strategies.

### **School Climate & Community Engagement**

To date, the school has not yet developed a stable school culture.

- BLCS had demonstrated a stable culture during its first charter term but is currently working to re-establish a stable culture.
- From the start of 2011-2012 to the start of 2012-2013, school leadership at BLCS has undergone 100% turnover, with an additional change of the Lower Academy principal due to personal health reasons during the fall of the current school year and the announced departure of current school leader, Richard Burke, at the end of the school year.
- From the 2011-2012 to 2012-2013 school year, 22 instructional staff chose or were asked not to return from an instructional staff of 48, resulting in an attrition rate of about 45%. An additional 8 instructional staff left between the start of the school year and February 2013<sup>10</sup>.
- To date, 26 students (of a total start of year enrollment of 569) have left the school, an attrition rate of 4.5%<sup>11</sup>.
- Attendance to date for the 2012-2013 school year has been 95%<sup>12</sup>.
- On the 2011-12 NYC DOE School Survey, BLCS's satisfaction scores were Average in two categories (Communication and Safety & Respect) when compared to citywide results (of schools with similar grades) and Below Average in two categories (Academic Expectations and Engagement). The satisfaction results have also decreased each of the past two years when a year ago they were Average for all four categories and the year before when they were Above Average for all four categories. Student and teacher participation in the survey were above citywide averages (94% to 92% for students and 96% to 82% for teachers) but parent participation was below citywide averages (45% to 53%).

<sup>10</sup> Self-reported information from school-submitted Data Collection Form.

<sup>11</sup> Self-reported information from school-submitted Data Collection Form.

<sup>12</sup> Self-reported information from school-submitted Data Collection Form.

### Progress Toward Attainment of Accountability Goals<sup>13</sup>

- Student attendance during the 2011-12 school year was at 95.2%, according to the school's Annual Report to NYSED, representing a met charter goal. (See above for 2012-2013 attendance to date.)

Based on document review and interviews during the May 13-14 visit to the school, the following was noted:

- School leadership reported that for the first time the school's Culture of Achievement Plan (CAP) was developed collaboratively by administration and staff. CAP is basis of school reports to Board and the basis for weekly staff professional development meetings
- The school launched monthly Town Hall meetings for grade levels groups as one of several structures designed to improve communication and engagement with staff.
- BLCS made adjustments to its behavioral approach to improve discipline and school culture. School leadership reported changes to student behavioral expectations and discipline code, clearer consequences for misbehavior, implementation of a merit/demerit system in College Prep Academy based on Lighthouse Academy SHINE (Self-Discipline, Humility, Intelligence, Nobility, Excellence) qualities and core values, intentional use of school celebrations to spotlight academic or behavioral success, and implementation of Responsive Classroom to support classroom management and school culture in grades K-8 and Student Advisory in HS grades.
- Approximately 16 teachers were interviewed one-on-one on the days of the visit and consistently reported that school discipline is clearer and more consistently implemented, that overall school culture had improved (sentiment was more strongly asserted by College Prep Academy (CPA) teachers, who were enthusiastic about the change, as compared to Lower Academy (LA) teachers, who said things were better but could still improve more), and were supportive of changes made by and support received by administration.
- Transitions within classrooms and in hallways during the days of the visit were observed to be safe, orderly and efficient.
- The school's Parent Association meets monthly.

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<sup>13</sup> Goal analysis is considered a neutral point for the purposes of this evaluation.

## Financial Health

To date, the school is in a strong position to meet near-term financial obligations and is financially sustainable based on current practices.

- BLCS received a clean financial audit with no material findings.
- The school is in a strong position to meet all of its liabilities in the next 12 months.
- The school is in a position to cover all its future expenses for the foreseeable future without an infusion of cash.
- The school is meeting its enrollment target, indicating a stable budget.
- The school is meeting its debt obligation, however the school has a loan in excess of \$13 million that exceeds its charter term (July 2018).
- BLCS is operating at a surplus of almost 20% indicating an ability to create a strong reserve to support ongoing growth.
- The school has a good current debt to asset ratio.
- The school has a strong cash flow that has trended upward.
- The school is in a strong position to meet its future debt obligations.

### **Essential Question 3: Compliance with Charter and All Applicable Laws and Regulations**

To date, the school is compliant with some of its charter and applicable laws and regulations and out of compliance with others.

- To date, the Board is in compliance with:
  - The Board's membership size falls within the range outlined in the school's charter and in the Board's bylaws.
  - All Board members have submitted conflict of interest and financial disclosure forms and do not demonstrate conflicts of interest.
  
- To date, the school is in compliance with:
  - The school has submitted required documentation for safety plan.
  - The school is in compliance with AED/ CPR certification.
  - The school is also in compliance fingerprint clearance and teacher certification documentation and requirements.
  - The school has submitted appropriate insurance documents.
  - The school submitted its required immunization documentation and is in compliance with Department of Health standards of 98.8% for immunization.
  
- To date, the Board is out of compliance with:
  - The Board did not meet in October, December or April and will therefore not meet the required minimum of ten times specified in its by-laws.

## **Essential Question 4: What are the School's Plans for the Next Charter Term?**

As reported by school leadership, the following was noted:

- The school intends to complete its expansion to K-12 should its application for renewal and continued expansion be approved.
- The school, currently organized in two academies, a Lower Academy (K-6) and a College Prep Academy (7-10), will be re-organized beginning next school year into three academies: Lower Academy (K-4), Upper Academy (5-7) and College Prep Academy (8-12).
- BLCS will continue to refine and develop its programs, partnerships (particularly with the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fordham University, and Kaplan K-12), and assessment program.

## Part 4: Essential Questions and Accountability Framework

### The CSAS Accountability Framework

To help NYC DOE authorized charter schools better understand what we mean by success for charter schools, the NYC DOE's Charter Schools Accountability and Support (CSAS) has developed an Accountability Framework build around four essential questions for charter school renewal:

1. Is the school an academic success?
2. Is the school a fiscally sound, viable organization?
3. Is the school compliant with its charter and all applicable law and regulations?
4. What are the school's plans for its next charter term?

#### 1. Is the School an Academic Success?

##### 1a. High Academic Attainment and Improvement

Schools that are academic successes have many of the characteristics below:

- Meet absolute performance goals
- Meet student progress goals
- Are closing the achievement gap for at risk students, including special needs and ELL students
- Are surpassing performance of DOE identified peer-schools
- Are surpassing performance district and city proficiency or better averages
- Are meeting other rigorous academic and non-academic goals as stated in school's charter

Evidence for success might include, but not be limited to, the following depending on school configurations:

- Grades 3-8 NYS ELA Results (absolute performance, individual student progress, comparative performance to similar schools, home district or city averages, progress for at-risk populations)
- Grades 3-8 NYS Math Results (absolute performance, individual student progress, comparative performance to similar schools, home district or city averages, progress for at-risk populations)
- Grades 4 and 8 NYS Science Results (absolute performance, individual student progress, comparative performance to similar schools, home district or city averages, progress for at-risk populations)
- Grades 8-12 NYS Regent Exam Results
- When applicable, NYSAA or other approved alternate assessments results
- HS 4- and 6-Year Graduation Rates (absolute and progress, overall, for at-risk student populations)
- Grades 8-12 College Readiness Credit Accumulation
- Percentage of Students Applying to and Being Admitted to College
- Percentage of Students Taking AP Courses and/or Percentage of Students Passing AP Courses
- Results on state accountability measures
- Charter School Academic and Non-Academic Goals
- NYC Progress Reports

##### 1b. Mission and Academic Goals

Schools with successful missions and goals have many of the characteristics below:

- Have an animating mission statement that staff, students and community embrace
- Set ambitious academic and non-academic goals that entire school community knows and embraces
- Have processes for regular monitoring and reporting on progress toward school goals
- Have processes for adjusting strategies in support of goals as appropriate in response to monitoring data

Evidence for successful missions and goals might include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Mission statement, charter, external documents (parent and family handbooks, school website, etc.)
- Annual reports, school improvement plans, leadership board reports
- Board agendas and minutes
- Parent, student, and teacher satisfaction surveys
- Participation at parent-teacher conferences, school advocacy events, participation in academic goal related programs

### **1c. Responsive Education Program**

Schools with successful education programs have many of the characteristics below:

- Are self-reflective and examine practice based on outcomes against goals
- Have well-thought out curricular programs that are aligned with NYS learning outcomes as described by state standards and the new Common Core Curriculum.
- Use instructional models and resources consistent with school mission and that are flexible in addressing the needs of all learners
- Have defined strategies that they can measure and monitor for closing the achievement gap
- Offer defined opportunities for remediation and acceleration
- Implement a coherent and effective interim assessment system (e.g., use of formative, interim, and summative assessment data) for monitoring progress, predicting performance, and adjusting instruction
- Have an effective process for supporting improved classroom instruction, including frequent observation and feedback
- Have effective strategies and quality instructional programs for addressing students with special needs and ELLs
- Use a defined process for evaluating curricular tasks, programs and resources for effectiveness and fit with school mission and goals

Evidence for successful education programs, in addition to positive results, may include, but not be limited to, many of the following:

- Instructional planning documents (alignments, scope and sequences, curriculum maps, unit and lesson plans, etc)
- Student/teacher schedules
- Classroom observations
- Student Intervention / Response to Intervention program description and resources
- Interim assessment results
- Student and teacher portfolios
- Data findings; adjusted lesson plans
- Self-assessment documentation
- Professional development plans and resources

### **1d. Learning Environment**

Schools with successful learning environments have many of the characteristics below:

- Have a strong culture that connects high academic and behavioral expectations in a way that motivates students to give their best effort academically and socially
- Use a comprehensive approach to student management, including positive behavioral expectations and a clear discipline policy to build and sustain a safe, orderly, and supportive classroom environment
- Provide for safe, respectful, efficient transitions, hallways, cafeteria, yard, etc.
- Have classrooms where academic risk-taking and student participation is encouraged and supported
- Provide opportunities for students to actively engage in their own learning and in the life of the school

- Have a formal or informal character education, social development, or citizenship program that provides opportunities to develop as individuals and citizens

Evidence for successful learning environments may include, but not be limited to, many of the following:

- School mission and articulated values
- Student management plan (code of conduct, school values, discipline policy, positive incentive system, etc.)
- Student attendance and retention rates
- Student discipline data
- DOE School Survey student results
- DOE School Survey parent and teacher safety and respect results
- Self-administered satisfaction survey results
- Leadership, staff, and, if appropriate, student interviews
- Classroom observations
- Scheduled student engagement opportunities (e.g., student advisory, internships, student government, student led conferences, peer tutoring, peer mediation, etc.)

## 2. Is the School a Fiscally Sound, Viable Organization?

### 2a. Governance Structure and Organizational Design

Schools with successful governance and organizational design structures have many of the characteristics below:

- Operate with a clearly articulated governance structure, compliant with its charter and all applicable laws and regulations
- Have a capable Board of Trustees with appropriate blend of skills and experiences to provide oversight and strategic direction to fulfill the mission and goals of its charter
- Have a Board that is fully compliant with all applicable laws and regulations, particularly but not limited to open-meeting laws and conflict of interest regulations
- Have developed a succession plan for board and school leadership, consistent with the charter and Board by-laws, to ensure continuity of direction and leadership over time and despite circumstance
- Implements a school leadership structure that is aligned with charter and that is sufficient to fulfill school's mission and achieve its accountability goals; it also has clear lines of accountability for leadership roles, accountability to Board, and, if applicable, relationship with a charter management organization
- Have timely and appropriate access to legal counsel
- Implemented a process for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the school's organization and leadership structure
- Have instructional leadership staffing and support structures that holds staff accountable for student learning outcomes and provide regular feedback on instruction to teachers

Evidence for school governance and organizational design may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- School charter
- Board by-laws, roster, trustee resumes, meeting agenda and minutes
- Annual conflict of interest forms
- Staff roster, job descriptions, staff handbook, operations manual
- School calendar, professional development plan

### 2b. School Climate and Community Engagement

Schools with a sustaining school climate and engaged parent and community support have many of the characteristics below:

- A healthy professional school climate that is collaborative, student centered, and open to parents and community support
- An effective process for recruiting, hiring, supporting, and evaluating leadership and staff
- A flexible, data-driven approach to professional development for all staff
- An effective way of measuring and monitoring core constituency satisfaction (parent, staff, and, when age appropriate, student), including the DOE School Survey
- Effective home-school communication practices to ensure meaningful parent involvement in the learning of their children
- Strong community-based partnerships and advocacy for the school

Evidence for school climate and community engagement may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- DOE School Survey satisfaction parent, teacher, and, if appropriate student results
- Student retention and wait list data
- Staff retention data
- Leadership, staff, parent, student interviews
- Student and staff attendance rates
- Parent attendance at parent-teacher conferences
- Parent association meeting calendar and minutes
- Community partnerships and sponsored programs

## **2c. Financial and Operational Health**

Schools that are responsible stewards of public funds and effective, sustaining organizations have many of the characteristics below:

- Consistently meet its student enrollment and retention targets
- Annual budgets that meets all short- and long-term financial responsibilities with available revenues
- School leadership and Board that oversee financial and operational responsibilities in a manner that keeps the school's mission and academic goals central to decision-making
- Boards and school leadership that maintain effective internal controls of finances to ensure integrity of financial management and a proactive approach to mitigating risk
- Consistently clean financial audits
- If applicable, strong, accountable partnerships with management organizations and other partners and significant vendors to support delivery of chartered school design and academic program
- A safe, clean and appropriately resourced educational facility with all appropriate services specified in charter and mandated by appropriate law and regulations

Evidence for a financially sound, viable organization may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- School budget, P&Ls, and monthly/quarterly cash-flow reports
- Appropriate insurance documents
- Required facility documents (lease, certificate of occupancy, fire and safety inspections, etc.)
- Financial audits
- Financial leader(s) resume and accountability documents
- Operational policies and procedures
- Operational org chart
- Secure storage areas for student and staff records
- Policies/protocols for maintaining secure records
- School safety plan

### 3. Is the School in Compliance with its Charter and All Applicable Law and Regulations?

#### 3a. Approved Charter and Agreement

Schools in substantial compliance with their charter and agreement have:

- Implemented the key features of their charter as described in the original charter and as modified in approved revisions to their charter, including but not limited to mission, academic program, school organization, grade configuration, enrollment, goals, etc.
- Ensure that update-to-date charter is publicly available to staff, parents, and school community
- Implemented comprehensive academic, behavioral, oversight, management, and operational policies and procedures that are substantially aligned with the charter and the school's stated mission and vision

Evidence for a school's compliance with the terms of its charter and charter agreement may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Authorized charter and signed agreement
- Charter revision request approval and documentation
- School mission
- School policies and procedures
- Site visits
- Board meetings, agendas and minutes
- Leadership/board interviews

#### 3b. Applicable Federal and State Law

Schools in substantial compliance with federal and state law have:

- Met all legal requirements for Title I and IDEA regulations and reporting
- Comparable enrollment of FRL, ELL and Special Education students to those of their district of location *or* are making documented good faith efforts to reach comparable percentages
- Implemented school policies related to student discipline and promotion and retention that are fully compliant with laws and regulations related to students with disabilities and due process regulations
- Conducted independently verified fair and open lottery and manage with integrity enrollment process and annual waiting lists
- Employed instructional staff with appropriate security clearances and certification requirements

Evidence for compliance with applicable federal and state law may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- School reporting documents
- School's Annual Report
- Student recruitment plan and resources
- Student management policies and promotion and retention policies
- Student discipline records
- Lottery policy, resources, and records; enrollment procedures and records
- Staff roster, fingerprint clearance for all staff, certification status of all instructional staff

#### 3c. Applicable Regulations

Schools in substantial compliance with applicable regulations have:

- Safe and secure facilities with no significant compliance concerns with applicable regulations
- Consistently clean annual audits, up-to-date escrow accounts, and have completed all other financial reporting as required
- Boards that meet requirements for size, meeting frequency, public notice, applicable open-meeting and conflict of interest regulations, as well as complying with NYC DOE CSO's requirements for reporting changes in board membership and securing approval for new board members.
- Informed NYCDOE CSO, and where required, received CSO approval for changes in significant partnerships, such as dropping/replacing a management organization
- Effectively engaged parent associations

Evidence for compliance with applicable regulations may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- School or building safety plan; appropriate inspection documents
- Annual audits, escrow accounts, other financial reporting documents
- Board roster, calendar, agenda and minutes, conflict of interest documents, notification of changes/approval of new member request documents
- Charter revision requests, revised or new contracts
- Parent association calendar of meetings, identified officers, parent association agenda and minutes, parent satisfaction survey results
- Interviews

#### **4. What Are the School's Plans for its Next Charter Term?**

##### **4a. School Expansion or Model Replication**

In anticipation of a new charter term schools may be considering various growth options: replication, expansion to new grades or increased enrollment or altering their model in some significant way. Successful schools generally have processes for:

- Conducting needs/opportunity assessments
- Forming Board and leadership committees or subcommittees to investigate options, develop action plans, ensure capacity and resources are aligned, etc.
- Engaging school community in articulating charter revisions (or a new charter in cases of replication) to address the proposed growth plans
- Ensuring that the final proposal is ambitious but realistic in its plans
- Creating a well-reasoned and documented prospective for the school's new charter term and, if applicable, a new charter proposal (for replication)

Evidence for likely success in planning for school growth in a new charter term may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Application Part I: Retroactive Analysis, including performance results and analyses of the current charter term
- Application Part II: Prospective Analysis, including mission, program description, governance, organization, budget, etc. for new term
- Leadership and Board interviews

##### **4b. Organizational Sustainability**

Successful schools consistently perform despite change. While there is no single path for ensuring sustainability, successful schools often have the following features:

- School anticipates organizational opportunities/needs and plans for resource development (human resource policies for growing your own talent, for example, or fundraising or budget management to take care of anticipated capital needs and to mitigate risks for the unexpected, or board development to bring new talent or specific needs-based expertise to the school)

Evidence for organizational sustainability may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Board roster and resumes
- Board committees and minutes
- School organization chart
- Staff rosters
- Staff handbook
- Leadership and staff interviews
- Budget

#### **4c. School or Model Improvements**

Successful schools are thoughtful about the continued appropriateness of school design features and elements of their models. They:

- Review performance carefully and even if they don't make major changes through expansion or replication, they are careful to adjust elements to ensure continued and improved success.
- Develop plans to improve the school learning environment, including improving their facilities to expand program offerings and/or developing new partnerships to further the school's mission.

Evidence for successful improvements to a school's program or model may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Application Part I: Retroactive Analysis, including performance results and analyses of the current charter term
- Application Part II: Prospective Analysis, including mission, program description, governance, organization, budget, etc. for new term
- Leadership and board interviews
- MOUs or contracts with partners